RSS for Educators

Author John G. Hendron

Summary by Adele Ford

RSS for Educators by John G.Hendron is an excellent book for readers like me who are new to various Web 2.0 tools. The book is 256 pages, not including the references, appendixes, glossary, and index, but is an easy-read. RSS for Educators gives detailed information on RSS, blogs, newsfeeds, podcasts, and wikis; and how they can be utilized in the classroom or school.

Blogs was the topic of the first chapter. Blogs could be used as a link between schools and home. Hendron states that “teachers are ultimately blogging for the benefits of their students” (Hendron, 2008, p. 12).

The second chapter of RSS for Educators was dedicated to wikis. Hendron describes the different types of wiki engines and their purposes as well as how to create a wiki document. Possible uses of wikis were to post minutes of meetings, for curriculum development, to share or develop lesson plans, to use as a sign in sheet, and many more. “The use of wikis in education can increase productivity when everyone has access to networked computers. Wikis allow everyone equal access to content. Wikis also allow the ability to create and modify content within a framework that preserves changes, document history, and enables one to search via text, keyword, or the author’s name” (Hendron, 2008, p. 44).

The third chapter was on podcasts. Podcasts are pre-recorded audio programs that are posted to a website and made available for download so people can listen to them on personal devices such as i-pods. The implications that podcasts have in education is that teachers can record lectures or lessons, discussions, post it for absent students or for students who need to hear material more than once. You subscribe to podcasts and can receive them through RSS feeds.

Chapter four of RSS for Educator was about VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) which allows online users to do video, text, chat or use voice over a high speed internet connection and Synchronous Communication which is time-delayed publishable online content.

Chapter five and six describe simple editing with the software applications Audacity and Garage Band. Chapter seven is the basics on blogging. Chapter eight helps readers to use news aggregators which “decode RSS and translate it into individual blog entries, news stories, or otherwise logical chunks of information” (Hendron, 2008, p. 133).

Lastly, chapters nine through twelve give more concrete examples of how the Web 2.0 tools can be utilized in the classroom. I especially liked these chapters that he dedicated to classroom applications, because he goes in- depth on integrating these technologies to enrich lessons and classroom learning experiences. The appendixes and glossary were also quite useful.

Throughout RSS for Educators, screen shots are included and other visuals to further

explain the concepts Hendron was describing, He talks about several free services and

sites that would benefit students and teachers in and out of the classroom. The overall theme for RSS for Educators is the RSS (Really Simple Syndication). You use RSS to tie everything together. RSS, news feeds, aggregators, gets the updated information from theses Web 2.0 tools to you all in one place.

The most useful part of RSS for Educators for me was the lesson plans using blogs to obtain educational objectives. These plans could bring more “dialogue” into the classroom and engage all students. This would be what administrators and the teachers themselves would appreciate. He uses his own classroom experiences to make the material relevant to educator. As educators, we love time and tested materials that work.

Hendron stated that, “For anyone involved in education, the learning never ends” (Hendron, 2008, p.ix). This is very true. I learned a lot from reading this book. I now know the differences, and uses for RSS, blogs, newsfeed, podcasts, and wikis.

I would recommend RSS for Educators to those new to the Web 2.0 tools or those who need a comprehensible refresher. This book goes into detail from start to finish.

Hendron, J. G. (2008). *RSS for educators: Blogs, newsfeeds, podcasts, and wikis in the classroom,* Eugene, OR: ISTE.